United Nations E/CN.3/2006/23

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
14 December 2005

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Thirty-seventh session
7-10 March 2006
Item 4 (g) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: Round Table on Business Survey Frames

Report of the Round Table on Business Survey Frames

Note by the Secretary-General

In compliance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Round Table on Business Survey Frames, which is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report of the Round Table.

* E/CN.3/2006/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 4* (E/2005/24), chap. I.B.

05-64414 (E) 231205

Report of the Round Table on Business Survey Frames

Purpose

To provide a forum for the exchange of views and experience and the conduct of joint experiments related to the development, maintenance and use of business registers to support survey sampling and other statistical activities related to the production of business statistics. The Round Table is an informal body and participation is on a voluntary basis. Participants, however, are required to contribute to the programme of the annual meeting. Although its mandate does not emanate from a formal body, the Round Table could, on the basis of its discussions and/or experiments, make recommendations to a formal body (e.g., the Statistical Commission) regarding the consideration and/or adoption of certain practices or standards.

Year organized

1986 (Ottawa).

Participating countries/statistical agencies (2005 meeting)

Australia, Canada, China, Estonia, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Finland, France, Germany, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Mexico, Norway, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Meetings (held annually)

First meeting: Ottawa, May 1986.

Most recent meeting: Cardiff, United Kingdom, 16-21 October 2005.

Topics discussed at the Cardiff meeting

- Role of the business register in the statistical system
- Business register quality and coverage
- Enterprise group recording and measurement
- Developing new register systems and tools
- Dissemination of register data
- Implementing classification changes
- Confidentiality
- Future of the Round Table.

Future of the Round Table

This session was added to the agenda at the request of several participants as a result of questions from senior managers about the value for money of the Round Table. Participants agreed that the Round Table had to respond to these challenges and better demonstrate the value of the meetings if it was to continue. The options of keeping things as they are, or ending the Round Table, were not supported.

To respond to these challenges, the Round Table agreed to set up a small steering group, consisting of the United Kingdom, Germany, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Turkey and Australia or New Zealand (to be confirmed). The roles of this group will be:

- To actively engage the Statistical Commission and other senior management forums to promote the work of the Round Table and seek their inputs regarding future activities
- To develop links with other relevant international bodies, for example the World Bank, to ensure support for attendance by developing countries
- To ensure coordination with meetings on related topics, for example, the profiling meeting, expected to be held in Italy in 2006, and the multinational enterprises meeting proposed by the Nordic countries
- To assist the host of the next meeting on matters relating to content.

Three concrete outputs for the steering group were agreed:

- A report of the 2005 Round Table meeting, to be presented to the Statistical Commission (and any other relevant bodies) by spring 2006
- A paper reviewing the achievements so far and setting out the scope and goals of the Round Table for future years, as well as details as to how these goals will be met, by mid-2007. In terms of the scope, the steering committee will consider the extent to which inputs from users and suppliers of data can be included in future meetings, the role of the Round Table with respect to the growing field of register-based statistics and how it can facilitate international training in register-related topics. This paper will be circulated to the full Round Table mailing list for comments before it is finalized
- The steering group will request progress reports from Round Table participants in the summer of 2006. These will be made public, with a summary of the main issues raised. They will also be used to finalize the topics for the agenda of the 2007 meeting.

Products

The host agency updates an Internet site with the most recent documentation after the annual meetings. Papers and progress reports by participating countries from the Cardiff meeting are available from www.statistics.gov.uk/events/nineteenth_international. Documents from previous meetings and links to still existing websites are available from http://forum.europa.eu.int/irc/dsis/businessurvey/info/data/links.htm.

Planned activities

Next meeting: Germany, fall 2007.

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Contact for information on the next meeting, to be held in Germany in the fall of 2007

To be determined.